

THREE COUNT[©]

Volume 1, Number 30

April 14, 1992

Flair Loses to Savage at Two WWF Tapings

By JOHN MUSE
Three Count Columnist

TOLEDO -- Ric Flair, who lost the World Wrestling Federation title to Randy Savage April 5 at Wrestlemania VIII, lost two rematches April 7 and April 8 at WWF television tapings in Toledo and Kalamazoo, Mich., respectively.

Both matches -- neither of which was taped for television -- lasted approximately six minutes, and had the same ending. Flair leaned with his back against the ring ropes and held his hand out for "Mr. Perfect" Curt Hennig to hand him a foreign object. Savage switched places with Flair and Hennig inadvertently gave the object to the Macho Man, allowing him to clobber Flair and gain the pinfall. After the match, Hennig and Flair began shoving each other, but smoothed things out before returning to the locker room.

The results to the WWF's other dark matches were also the same for both nights. The Ultimate Warrior defeated Papa Shongo in less than six minutes with a splash, Shawn Michaels defeated Bret Hart via countout in the best match on both nights, The Undertaker and Sid Justice fought to a double countout and Money, Inc. defeated Sergeant Slaughter=Jim Duggan when Duggan was caught using his two-by-four in front of the referee.

As for the post-Wrestlemania angles that will take the WWF through Summer Slam, only two occurred on the Toledo taping, which was for upcoming *Wrestling Challenge* shows. In a match between Repo Man and The British Bulldog, the referee got knocked down, allowing Repo to use his towing rope on the 'Dog. Repo hung Bulldog over the top rope with the rope until the WWF goon squad emerged and made him stop. Bulldog was carried out on a stretcher. Also, Tatanka and Rick Martel had a staredown in the aisleway between their matches, but no punches were thrown.

The only other highlights of the Toledo show were the return of Kerry Von

Erich and the following line from Flair, referring to The Lovely Elizabeth during an interview: "Randy, you bought the cow after I got the milk for nothing." A live Piper's Pit was also held, but was not taped. The featured guest was The Brooklyn Brawler, which should surprise some people.

(Continued on Page 3)



Former WCW and WWF champion Ric Flair lost to Randy Savage twice at WWF television tapings.

Sting Out Indefinitely

By Alex Marvez
Three Count Editor

World Championship Wrestling Champion Sting is out for at least one week and possible until the *Wrestle War* pay-per-view show May 17 after sustaining injuries in a match with Big Van Vader April 12 at Atlanta's Omni.

Sting sustained bruised ribs, one chipped rib and bruised his spleen. The injuries occurred when Sting climbed to the top rope and attempted a flying body press. Vader caught Sting and turned it into a power slam which was more painful than anticipated. The "finish" of the match had to be changed, with Vader immediately punching the referee for the disqualification. Sting was helped from the ring by four WCW employees.

Dave Meltzer of *The Wrestling Observer Newsletter* said there has been talk in the WCW offices of dropping the Sting-Vader feud because Vader works too rough-and-tumble a style. An angle was scheduled to be shot April 14 to explain the injury. Ricky Steamboat vs. Rick Rude will headline the cards Sting will miss, with no word on what will happen to Vader.

Dustin Rhodes sustained a concussion in a car crash on the way to the Omni show and did not wrestle. Rhodes is not expected to miss more than a few dates, if any.

Inside...

Geraldo show -- Pg 2

Briefly -- Pg 3

Dore's Story -- Pg 4

Arezzi int. -- Pg 5-8

Muse's Japan -- Pg 11

WWF Slammed on *Geraldo*

By ALEX MARVEZ
Three Count Editor

The damaging stories of alleged sexual abuse by former World Wrestling Federation employees **Rita Chatterton** and **Murray Hodgson** garnered mainstream attention once again April 13 on the *Geraldo* talk show.

Chatterton, who was the WWF's first female referee under the name **Rita Marie**, said she was sexual harassed and raped by WWF owner **Vince McMahon** on July 16, 1986 (the word "rape" was bleeped from the *Geraldo* show for legal reasons). Chatterton said she spent that evening trying to ask McMahon why she was receiving decreasing work in the promotion. Chatterton alleges that after attending a dinner at a Greek restaurant in Poughkeepsie, NY, with McMahon and several other WWF employees, McMahon asked the two head to another restaurant together alone afterward. Chatterton said she followed McMahon to the parking lot of a Denny's, where McMahon asked she enter the back seat of his limousine. McMahon then allegedly told her the potential of her career (her face on the cover of *Time* magazine, a wrestling doll in her image, etc.) and then unzipped his pants, stating, "If you want a half-million dollar contract, you have to satisfy me. That's the way it goes." Chatterton claimed she was forced into oral sex with McMahon, and when she stopped, he ripped off her jeans, pulled her on top of him and had sex with her.

Chatterton explained she waited to publicly state her charges for three reasons: 1) "At that time, nobody talks in wrestling."; 2) Chatterton saw an attorney who told her the case would end up being her word against his, and her reputation would likely get dragged through the mud; 3) Chatterton said she did not want to put her parents, who were in poor health, through an ordeal. Chatterton's father, her last surviving parent, died a month ago. When asked why she didn't come forward sooner, Chatterton said, "No one would believe me if I came forward with this seven years ago."

Chatterton cannot file a lawsuit against McMahon on allegations of rape because the statute of limitations has expired,

according to Chatterton's attorney, **Robert Wolve**. However, Chatterton is still contemplating litigation in a class action suit by searching for other former WWF employees who claim to have sustained a sexually related crime at the hands of McMahon. Chatterton also told the same story to *Now It Can Be Told*, a television tabloid show produced by *Geraldo* founder **Geraldo Rivera**. WWF spokesman **Steve Planamenta** would not return numerous phone calls. Wolve told *Three Count* his client has passed a polygraph test, and she alleges a "pattern of criminal conduct" existed in the WWF.

Hodgson also retold his claim that he was fired by the WWF after refusing to have sex with the company's former vice president (**Pat Patterson**). The rest of the show consisted of some women with serious charges against sports figure (one woman who claimed she was dumped by Atlanta Hawks basketball player **Dominique Wilkins** after she became pregnant) and outrageous sports groupies, like Morganna "The Kissing Bandit" **Roberts**.

Sheet Spotlight

Here's a look at the top stories of some of the other wrestling newsletters, with subscription information:

• **Dave Meltzer's Wrestling Observer Newsletter** (April 13): Lengthy Wrestlemania VIII report and analysis of *Now It Can Be Told* WWF story; First to report story in the *Allentown Morning-Call* on WWF sexual harassment allegations, provide complete transcript of Roddy Piper refuting WWF sandal and discuss the **Phil Mushnick-Steve Planamenta** war in the *Charles-ton Post-Courier*. Weekly; \$1.50 an issue. P.O. Box 1228, Campbell CA 95009-1228.

• **Wade Keller's Pro Wrestling Torch** (April 9): Complete summaries of Wrestlemania VIII and reports on *Now It Can Be Told* and *CBS Evening News* involving the WWF; First to report details on **Hulk Hogan's** new movie project, **Ric Flair's** comments on the Maryland local news and **Marty Janetty's** pre-trial date; Should also be complimented for prompt delivery. Weekly; \$1.25 an issue (Free sample available). P.O. Box 201844, Minneapolis MN 55420.

• **Steve Sims's Lucha Libre Weekly** (April 7): A well-written analysis of how the EMLL promotion managed to get **Konan** and **Love Machine** over as babyfaces; Comprehensive lucha results from Mexican television and house shows, and results from Japan. *Es muy bueno*. Weekly; \$1 an issue. 1427 West Dickens Ave., Chicago, IL 60614-3003.

• **Ron Lemieux's Arena Report** (April 6): Complete report on WCW show April 5 in Jacksonville; Well-written Columns by Harry White (on Cauliflower Alley) and Jeff Bowdren (on divorce because of wrestling). A very good issue. Bi-weekly; \$1 an issue. P.O. Box 952547, Lake Mary, FL 32795-2547.

THREE COUNT®

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Three Count is a weekly professional wrestling newsletter published every Tuesday. Price for subscription is \$6 for one month, \$18 for three months, \$33 for six months and \$66 for one year. Please address all subscription checks to Three Count at P.O. Box 12795, Gainesville, Fla., 32604-0795.

Briefly...

• The central braintrust of the Global Wrestling Federation -- Eddie Gilbert, Joe Pedicino, Bruce Pritchard and Boni Blackstone -- was released April 9 from the company by Max Andrews, the group's syndicator and money backer. Andrews could not afford to pay for their transportation, thus ending the association. The company will still run shows for television tapings every Friday in Dallas, but will only use Dallas-based talent. Bill Irwin and Skandar Akbar are now handling the booking chores. Gilbert had a meeting scheduled for either April 13 or 14 with the World Wrestling Federation. More on this story next week.

'Taker-Berserker Begin WWF Feud

(Continued from Page 1)

The *Superstars of Wrestling* taping in Kalamazoo was more lively. The 'Taker began a feud with The Barbarian. The two fought to a no contest, and after the match, Berserker clobbered Paul Bearer with his shield and unsuccessfully tried stabbing 'Taker with his sword.

The top matches taped for television were Savage defeating Irwin R. Shyster, Tito Santana defeating Repo Man via disqualification and Justice squashing Chris Walker (with Walker also doing a stretcher job). Crush (Bryan Adams) also worked, but I believe the match wasn't taped for television. The match with Savage against I.R.S. was taped because the television rating sweeps period begins in May. Normally, Savage would not defend his title on television. The Mountie and Nasty Boys weren't at either television taping.

Another WWF star missing in action is Jake Roberts, who is rumored to be headed to World Championship Wrestling. Roberts was not at either taping, and was buried heavily by WWF announcers Hennig and Vince McMahon on this past weekend's *Superstars* shows. Shongo, who was said to have interfered in the Hulk Hogan-Justice match at Wrestlemania VIII to cast a "voodoo curse" on the Hulkster, will feud with The 'Taker down the road.

Other highlights from WWF TV this past weekend included a vignette with Paul Ellering and The Legion of Doom in a back alley "in Chicago." The L.O.D. will feud with The Beverly Brothers for the time being. Michaels was also billed as the top contender for Hart's Intercontinental title. There were no non-squash matches that aired.



Cactus Jack

• Another story which will be elaborated on further next week is a claim made by Ric Flair March 31 on a Maryland television station news-

cast to sports anchorman George Michael. Flair said, "I've never been involved with steroids or any illegal drugs." Such a statement has drawn criticism of Flair by various wrestling personalities.

• Sting vs. Cactus Jack is the scheduled main event of World Championship Wrestling's June 20 pay-per-view show in Mobile, Ala. Other matches on the card include Rick-Scott Steiner vs. Steve Williams-Terry Gordy, Rick Steamboat vs. Rick Rude in an "Iron Man Challenge" (the winner is the one who can gain the most pinfalls within a 30-minute time period), Nikita Koloff, Dustin Rhodes-Barry Windham vs. Arn Anderson-Bobby Eaton-Steve Austin, Brian Pillman vs. Scotty Flamingo for the WCW light-heavyweight title, Johnny B. Badd vs. J.T. Southern and Van Hammer vs. Greg Valentine in a match to see who the "real Hammer" is. Also on the show will be a "Duel in the Sun" between Missy Hyatt and Madusa to determine the first lady of WCW. The two will compete in three contests: A volleyball game, a tug-of-war and a bikini posedown.

• "The Pegasus Kid" Chris Benoit will appear in WCW June 16 as part of the NWA's tag-team title tournament on the Clash of the Champions. Legitimate teams from Mexico, Japan, England and Australia are also slated to enter the tournament.

• Look for Lex Luger to get buried heavily on WCW telecasts during the upcoming weeks. Luger's highly touted segment on the *WWF Body Stars* show slated for April 11 never aired, but the "Total Package" made numerous appearances in the show.

• In an unconfirmed report, The Warlord was suspended last week by the WWF for failing an anabolic steroid test. WWF spokesman Steve Planamenta would not return phone calls to confirm the news.

• Gordon Solie and Buddy Colt were on Tampa radio station WFLA April 11 from 9 a.m.-noon. Solie fired off a Ross-like line by saying, "It took Hulk Hogan a long-time to become an overnight success."

• Dutch Mantell appeared as a guest on Ric Carter's *Wrestle Talk* radio show April 5, and fired off zingers on Dusty Rhodes and Jerry Lawler among others. Mantell is involved in Jim Cornette's Smokey Mountain Wrestling, a new Knoxville-based group that will be reviewed here in upcoming weeks.

Truth or Boycott: Fans Must Decide

(Editor's note: Dore DeQuattro is not a wrestling promoter. However, DeQuattro made an impact on the wrestling world by organizing a March 31 news conference in New York City that featured former wrestling personalities who claimed sexual harassment from their bosses and comments about the archaic state of the industry in some areas. The event did not quite turn out as DeQuattro planned, as scheduled guests either no-showed or cancelled

Dore DeQuattro

for various reasons. DeQuattro, a 38-year-old trumpet player in the New York City Swing jazz band, summarizes his general thoughts on the news conference in the following column.)

Next week, my wife, Michelle, will tell you the exact details of the press conference. It was a complete disruption of my life, an absolute utter whirlwind that engulfed me. But it was worth it, because there comes a time in the lives of men and women when they become touched by a byte of history. When someone appears to run rough-shot on every human decency. My perception is that like Hitler in the 1930s and McCarthy in the 1950s, Vince McMahon exudes a sickening something. That certain feeling of power, greed and corruption fed by a lack of integrity.

McMahon has allowed the WWF to deteriorate into a venal company, totally out of control, lacking in any moral character with no sense of shame, as wrestlers, women and ringboys were all subject to the abominable wins of Vince, Pat, Mel and company. The WWF answer is to engage in deceit, utilizing cheap shots and paying off victims who threaten lawsuits. These means of cover-up are not acceptable to me. Many of you readers don't care. It's just wrestling or you forgive Vince for his dishonesty or you assume the allegations must be false. You just want to be left alone with Vince's "great wrestling product." If so, then you should read no further and be happy with the current state of pro wrestling.

Any wrestling fan with taste knows Vince's wrestling product is designed for five year olds, and is not much better than his morals. Wrestling would be far better off without his pernicious influences. So, you want these scandals to just go

away. But maybe you should examine yourselves, find a strand of self-respect and integrity within yourselves. Do not give this man your money. Do not make apologies for him. History gives man a chance to make a statement against evil. I made my decision and went forth.

The press conference drew most of the local media, *A Current Affair*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Inside Sports* and many others. We stated that it was called by people who love wrestling and respect the wrestlers. We just wanted the truth and to see wrestling cleaned up. A knockout punch was readied. Unfortunately, it was to be merely a jab. Bad luck, last-minute cancellations and no shows left my major press conference, which was purported to reveal new allegations, to just be a rehash of old material. I don't regret the conference one bit. With every ounce of my soul I fought injustice. My means fell far short because I dealt with people who didn't honor their commitment. McMahon sits in Stamford still totally in control, probably self-righteously believing his own equivocation. I don't believe him and never will. Don't worry if Vince is ever forced to exit the scene. Pro wrestling will be better for it. He will tenaciously hold onto his empire with every dubious trick and fabrication that he used to obtain dominance within it.

We said that if things don't change, we may call for a boycott. We also revealed four new lawsuits against McMahon -- one by Jim Stewart (McMahon's former chauffeur), the first time Billy Graham's lawsuit was announced, Murray Hodgson's and news about the one Billy Jack Haynes is planning. Attached is what our press conference called for. Truth or boycott. Very simple, truth or boycott. The next step is up to Vince. Do you readers have any doubts what his action will be? It is up to the wrestling fan to show some guts and enact the boycott.

1) As the WWF is geared to children, we call upon the organization to tell the truth about steroid abuses within it; 2) Reveal how the top executives engaged in sexual abuse; 3) Reduce the incidents of misogyny (abuse of women), racism and xenophobia on TV programming; 4) Introduce total dental and medical compensation for the wrestlers; 5) Allow the wrestlers to unionize if they desire to do so; 6) End the monopoly on venues, such as Madison Square Garden.

Solie Begins NWA Promos From Tampa

World Championship Wrestling will use legendary announcer and Tampa resident Gordon Solie as host of vignettes to narrate the history of the National Wrestling Alliance tag-team titles.

Solie, who has seen his announcing chores cut drastically the past few months, will introduce old NWA footage and interview former NWA champions from the leg-

Alex Marvez



endary Sportatorium in Tampa (the facility where the defunct Championship Wrestling from Florida taped its television shows each week).

WCW will re-introduce the NWA tag-team titles in a two-card angle beginning June 16 on a Clash of the Champions from Charleston, S.C., and concluding on WCW's Great American Bash pay-per-view show July 12 in Philadelphia. The Clash will feature eight tag-team bouts, and the Bash the remainder of the tournament.

IWF: Eddy Mansfield's group ran a show Saturday night at the Sumter County Fair with Blackjack Mulligan defeating The Possessor (Nasty Ned Brady) in the main event. Mulligan also replaced an injured Kip Winchester to team with Bret Colt in a tag-team victory over Billy Brooks-Bret Blair). Also on the show, Cliff Anderson defeated Randy Rhodes, The Nuclear Assassin pinned Private Schiffer, Big Til defeated Randy Fuller and Chubby MC won a squash match.

Suncoast: This group has a proposed guaranteed show in conjunction with Howard Brody's Ladies Major League Wrestling scheduled for May 16 at the Manatee County Civic Center hinging on a county meeting. If the show goes off, look for one of the main events to be Wendi Richter vs. Penelope Paradise.

- Suncoast will be promoting shows at two Tampa-area night clubs on a monthly basis. The first is an April 30 show at Club Fuente in Ruskin, with Rico Federico vs. El Tigre and Raul Mata vs. The Surgeon General. Suncoast will also begin running Tampa's Exposure Country and Western Bar May 2 with "Big V" Vern Henderson vs. Federico and Jumbo Baretta-Ion Weston vs. Rick Thames-Sonny T. There are 11 other matches featuring students from Larry Malenko's wrestling school.

Spotlight on: John Arezzi

In an amazing twist of irony, a man named Vince has almost caused the downfall of John Arezzi's Pro Wrestling Spotlight empire. Only this Vince wasn't Vince McMahon, the World Wrestling Federation owner who Arezzi has lambasted for years on his Pro Wrestling Spotlight radio show -- regarded as the nation's leading wrestling radio show and one of the most ardent followers of the WWF's steroid and sexual abuse stories. A split between Vince Russo, Arezzi's former business partner, and wrestling radio's "round mound of sound" has left the future of the Pro Wrestling Spotlight radio show and newsletter in jeopardy. Russo just produced his first issue of the newsletter without Arezzi, but the finished product bore no resemblance to Spotlight's first 12 issues. Russo has taken a pro-WWF stance, calling newsletter writers "liars" for their coverage of the WWF. Whether Arezzi's Spotlight show will air April 19 on WEVD in New York is uncertain for financial reasons. After that, the future is even more in doubt. In Part One of this two-part interview, Arezzi discusses his involvement with Russo, the switch from WGBB in the suburb of Babylon to WEVD in New York City and how the situation deteriorated to its current state.

AM: Let's begin by talking about how your relationship with Vince Russo began and what it deteriorated into.

JA: I met Vince last summer and approached him at his store "Will The Thrill Video." He has two stores named after his son in New York. I was given the lead to contact him because he had previously arranged some personal appearances by WWF guys, and I figured he would be a good prospect to sponsor my show on WGBB. I made an appointment and sold him on the first one to sponsor the show. He wanted to bring in a few wrestlers for some personal appearances, but he had no money to bring in WWF performers. I got him the Honky Tonk Man and we did a promotion, which he was satisfied with, in July 1991. I tried to get other personalities there, but he began to drag his feet and I began concentrating on my convention. I got some video transfers of old film from Madison Square Garden cards onto video tape, and he

didn't charge me for them, saying I was a good guy, blah blah blah. In the fall, I began contacting him because I wanted to see if he would advertise for the Christmas season or maybe do some more appearances. He suggested that if I ever needed a place to dub any videos or cassettes, he would offer his services. At the time, I just got the Eddie Gilbert-Cactus Jack video (which Arezzi sold through Pro Wrestling Spotlight), and had Vince do the dubbing.

He started approaching me last fall with the possibility of getting involved with the company, because he wanted to get into the wrestling business. I said that was fine. I didn't know him at all, but he was a businessman, seemed fairly successful, intelligent and was a wrestling fan. He seemed like a nice guy. He pushing to get involved with handling merchandise and talked about the possibility of starting a newsletter. I had been informed (former *Matwatch* editor) Steve Beverly was giving it up, and a lot of people said I should start a newsletter to try to fill that void. Vince had a journalism degree (from Indiana State), and always wanted to get in the business. I started to listen to him a little more intently, but something in my gut didn't feel right about him, especially when he began to seriously talk. He said he wanted to transfer the newsletter production to his place of business and work from there. In the wrestling business, you don't trust too many people. I've been burnt a few times when people wanted to be partners in my convention and they had ulterior motives. They wanted to get in the business, get on camera and use their contacts to get where they wanted to go. I was apprehensive when he said we had to get off WGBB if we were going to do the newsletter because WGBB has such a limited audience in broadcasting out of Babylon. It was a small watt station, but I reached a lot of people with it. Ironically, at the same time, I was talking to WEVD about moving over, but I thought the cost for an hour (\$1,053) was too expensive. He said we should make a move, and I said I really don't want to do it. WGBB extended me an awful lot of credit through my lean times, more than \$7,000. But he had these grand ideas about the newsletter, and he enticed me. Then he said he just wanted me to concentrate on the creative end on the show, getting guests and things. He wanted to take over the advertising. He said between myself and his partner, we would be able to get a lot of sponsors in the city. He said he knew a ton of people who would advertise with us on WEVD, but not on WGBB because he

couldn't pick up from where he lived.

He started calling WEVD, and they said they would work with us. He was starting at that point to try and take over, even back then. This set up alarms in my head, but I didn't follow through. I was in a bad situation. I had been extended as much credit as WGBB would allow, and they weren't going to allow me on the air unless I paid my bill. But WGBB said they were going to hold two benefits for me to help pay back my debt. I told Vince, because he said he was going to put up the initial money to get on WEVD, at least \$2,000. I told Vince they were going all out to keep me, doing what they can to help me pay off my back debt and keep on air. He said I was never going to get anywhere unless I go to New York City. He said he wouldn't invest on WGBB. He had pushed me into a corner, but he seem really gung ho, so I said I would give it a shot. He really seemed like a go-getter, and I got tired of being a one-man operation, trying to do the advertising, doing the show and filling the advertising orders. He said he would take care of it, and we shook hands on the deal Christmas week. We were to start on WEVD Jan. 5, but one thing that was really strange happened when we were putting together our first newsletter to coincide with the debut of the radio show. He said we were obviously going to have to have a full-page ad for the newsletter. On that, he said he would like it to be the Pro Wrestling Spotlight radio hour hosted by John Arezzi and Vince Russo. Initially, I said yes, but it just ate away at my stomach until I said, "Fuck, I'm not going to do this." I called him back to tell him I didn't want to be part of that situation. I told him I would bring him on each week to talk about the newsletter as part of his participation. He apologized for trying to be too big for his britches.

AM: You broke a lot of anti-WWF stories on your show. How did Vince react to that?

JA: Previously, he loved the show. He never indicated one way or the other I was doing anything wrong or reporting anything irritating to him in any way. He always questioned why no WWF people were on program, and I said we would have to do it either my way or no way. The only WWF guest we ever had on was Fred Blassie. Once you report anything negative on the WWF, they are going to shut off the channel of communication anyway. I gave Russo (WWF spokesman) Steve Planamenta's phone number. I told him he tells me nothing but lies. He doesn't confirm anything or give me anything but lies. I told him that if



John Arezzi

he wanted to try to get through to him he could call. We started putting out the newsletter, we had David Shultz and Billy Graham on our first show with all the explosive stuff they said, the *New York Post* writes about our stuff, and we're off and running. Well, the newsletter is a lot more difficult than I thought it would be and took a lot longer to produce than I thought. The \$1,053 was also hard to raise, especially without any sponsors.

Russo did not do what he said he was going to as far as sponsorship. We made a few calls together, but as far as his shoe-in with major advertisers, nothing ever developed.

I also got his material for the first newsletter and said uh-oh, because he was writing on a level I find irritating to my intelligence. I began to wonder what the fans were going to think. He started changing when the partnership was formed, and that's one thing I don't want to bypass. I let him and the listeners know all the time about the financial situation I was in. I was in debt from the previous convention, and had a debt for \$50,000 since I got back in the wrestling business in 1989. When we decided upon the name "Pro Wrestling Spotlight Enterprises," he wanted to do it legally and get the name incorporated. I said there was a chance I may file personal bankruptcy because I was buried by bills. Vince's lawyer said he didn't think it was wise to put my name on the incorporation forms, because my creditors may come after the corporation. So we put Vince as the sole stockholder, and I would have nothing initially on the corporation. That's maybe why I'm \$50,000 in debt. I consider myself a good journalist and I do a good radio show, but I have not proven to be the best businessman in the world.

Later into January, I'm really having a hard time with his writing, the redundancy and simplicity and stupidity of some of the things he was writing about, especially his TV columns. I wondered what the listeners and readers would say when they looked at

this crap. Sure enough, I started getting phone calls that people were really enjoying some parts (of the newsletter), but asking where the hell did I get Vince Russo. He wasn't very entertaining to read. I figured we must be getting a lot of negative letters, but I never saw them. That's something else that irritated me. We were getting a stack of mail from listeners and newsletter readers each week, because we were picking up 40-50 new subscribers a week. But he kept everything real secretive. His office from my home was a good hour drive, so I would only go once or twice a week. I would never see any of the mail when I went. He said we get a lot of letters, but people were not really writing to us about what we were writing in the newsletter. He said he would give me a whole box of letters he. He never did. And as I was doing the show each week, I noticed his ego was stating to get bigger and bigger and bigger.

Then he announced that he has discovered a wrestler that he wants to put through wrestling school. I said I didn't want any part of that. I know the business, and I don't want to be involved like that. I have enough of my own problems. I was in the rock and roll business, and I managed bands and singers. I don't want to have to play babysitter or look out for someone's welfare and future. He said he was going to take him to Johnny Rodz's wrestling school. He acquired some phone numbers from me when he was trying to do things to set up interviews. So he finds a big black guy named Bo Davis with blue eyes. First, Vince agrees to trade advertise for training this guy. Then he said, "I'm gonna be in the school, too. I'm gonna be a manager. This is gonna be great. I'm gonna start writing a column for the newsletter called Making of a Champion." Little things like this really started getting to me.

Now the WWF scandal is really starting to break, and he really gets irritated when we didn't talk for a few days when I was working on stories. He called me to ask what was happening. I didn't share too much of that with him, because I felt it was too serious to share with someone who has only been in the business for a couple of months. But in February, I'm starting to enjoy the newsletter more each week. I finally got him to curtail his stupid TV columns, and his "Where are They Now" interviews were good. But each week, he wanted more and more power. When we got involved with the partnership, I said I needed \$500 a week to pay for my personal expenses. My phone bill

was never under \$400, and my rent is \$800. He said he would take care of my personal expenses first before putting the money in his pocket. But I have never seen any money. When I handled the advertising, all the money went in my checking account instead of in the pot. At least I was able to pay my bills. Now, when we first got started, I didn't pay my rent for two months.

I figure I'm going to get taken to court any day to be evicted. I signed three or four advertisers and took \$2,000 to pay my bills early on. That's all I got out of the company since my association with Vince over a four month period of time. The newsletter money was coming in, and I wanted to know every week what we're spending. It's like pulling teeth as far as that went. The newsletter mail, booster club news... everything was coming to his address. I'm not accusing him of stealing, but I needed to know what was happening. I was more and more frustrated every week, and I was getting irate calls from friends of mine. "How come you're not answering our letters or printing them? Can't you take any criticism?" In March, with the scandals about to break, Vince was having a more and more difficult time getting through to Planamenta. Finally, he got through after Issue Six, which had McMahon's name on a tombstone on the cover. Vince (Russo) wanted an interview with Chief Jay Strongbow, who was his favorite wrestler. Steve said, "Why should I do anything with you guys? One week you have us on a tombstone, and the next week you want us to give you Chief Jay Strongbow?"

Vince taped the conversation and played it back for me. But on this tape, Vince started telling Steve that it was John Arezzi saying those things, not Pro Wrestling Spotlight. "I'm half of this. I don't agree with what the other newsletter guys said," Vince said. "I'm not a sheet writer. I'm an entertainment critic. I think we've gone too overboard with some of our coverage." Planamenta said he would think about Vince's request and get back to him. After not hearing from Steve, Russo called again to try to get the interview. I gave him Strongbow's home number, but they hung up on him. That week, Vince wrote a scathing editorial on Planamenta on why he couldn't interview Strongbow. I read it and said this was the best thing he had ever written, because this one really came from the heart. But he pulls it from the newsletter. He has second thoughts and doesn't run it. He said you have to give the guy a second chance. He revamped it to run later, but it appeared

nothing like it was initially.

AM: When was the final blow-up and how did it happen?

JA: March 15 was an explosive show, because it was the weekend of the *Donahue* deal. I had a real big problem with Vince and the typesetters of the newsletter, because I did a "Mat Memory" on Planamenta, and it mysteriously disappeared. I couldn't get any straight answers. I didn't want to get censored in own newsletter, which was beginning to happen. In the back of my head, I remember this conversation we had where he said the WWF is still what readers want, and not to worry about the 5,000 hard-core fans because you're not going to make money just focusing on hard-core fans. I said maybe we could still give inside information, but not totally expose the business. We could still probably make more money by putting a WWF wrestler on the cover and still give the casual fan more information than he had ever had before.

Anyway, Vince says he wants to give Planamenta another shot. I said he's not going to want to have anything to do with us, especially with the way the newsletter covers are. I got wind of a steroid symposium that was supposed to take place at the Plaza hotel March 24. I was informed of it the Sunday before it was scheduled to take place, and I said I'd like to go. I was told by a friend of mine that I was not going to be let in if I showed up. I decided to go anyhow. The day before the symposium, I talked to Vince Russo about it. I said I was going to crash it, and that's how we left it. I got a call from Vince in the afternoon, and he said he just got off the phone with Steve. They had a long conversation, and Steve decided to send us a video tape of the symposium to work with us halfway. I said that was fine, but I was still going to go anyway. He didn't say anything. As all this is going on, the wheels are starting to turn at Titan Sports, because they saw that we were not a team, that I'm the bad guy and Vince tries to portray the WWF as truth, justice and the American way. I guess they saw it and Vince gets a second call from Planamenta inviting him to the symposium. They said Vince McMahon himself had invited him. But he said they would let him go if he came alone. I felt I should go and cover it. He got a little upset, and maybe I acted like a kid, too. We called in a mediator -- Dave Meltzer. He said this was a situation where the WWF was going to try to divide and conquer us. I was in no mood to fight, so I decided I wouldn't go, but at least we would get the story through Vince.

Flair-Savage Blow-off a Mistake

It was one of those weeks, folks.

With all our harrumphing about the finish of the Ric Flair-Randy Savage match on April 5, life has intruded once more on the fantasy world that sports and wrestling often is. Best wishes to Arthur Ashe in his battle against AIDS. It has nothing to do with wrestling, yet I feel soon it may have everything to do with it. With the ring-rat sex (surely) and blading (definitely) that goes on, how can AIDS not be the next big thing in

Paul Hanlin Jr.

wrestling's near future?

The reason why Wrestle War will bomb is because as of now, it's a one-match show. All the best workers are in one match, save Cactus Jack and Madusa. A lot of gristle to go through to get to the steak.

Finishing something can be dreadful. We dread our lives finishing, yet we can do nothing about it. So it is with booking finishes to main events of wrestling cards, be they house shows, live cable specials or pay-per-views. How can a matchmaker come up with one that plays both ends against the middle? Something that will raise heat among fans to the point of coming back, yet send them home not feeling cheated.

WCW (more often than not) has sent them home feeling just that. We even make fun of it, as the "Dusty finish" is part of every hardcore fan's vocabulary. The riddle of the Sphinx is easier to solve than when I see a finish that simply boggles the mind, as the WWF title match at Wrestlemania VIII showed.

Simply put, Vince McMahon's on-the-job stress has caught up with his booking, normally his strength. Flair should have been put over, with The Lovely Elizabeth turning on Randy and leaving with Flair afterward. So what happens? He loses to Savage in their debut match, killing any interest built up for the past seven weeks. It's clockwork. It's so predictable.

Who screwed up? Vince, for reasons already noted? Savage? Did he balk at doing the job for Flair and ignore the long-term economic benefits to his employer of a Flair win and a Liz turn?

Had that finish occurred, it would have popped Titan's biggest houses since the Hulk Hogan-Paul Orndorff feud of 1986. I'm sure of it. Now, what can they do to keep it going? Savage has his wife and the belt.



Sure, Flair will get rematches, he can regain it at Summer Slam and they can still switch Liz, but it won't have half the impact it would have had before 60,000 shocked fans and a national pay-per-view audience. The time to do that finish was now, not in August. Jeez, there may not even be a WWF in August if the latest round of charges are true. Vince may wind up being wrestling's Fast Eddie Savitz before it's done. No wonder "The Cream Team" didn't want *anything* told to Geraldo Rivera. Now or ever.

Be patient, Hulk and Sid Justice. You're next. .

A disqualification in the main event of the Fed's biggest show of the year, due to outside interference from a guy who once extolled the virtues of Pittsburgh and a Rasta the Voodoo Mon knockoff? As the Muser (a.k.a. John Muse) would surely tell you, if the main event of All Japan's biggest card of the year had that result, you'd still be hearing about the riot. Hogan just doesn't give a damn anymore. At least Sid and his squeegee vs. Brian Pillman and Mike Graham was conclusive.

History proves in or out of the ring, Hogan does what's best for Hogan and the hell with everyone else. My favorite non-job, even more than last December 12 against Genichiro Tenryu at the Tokyo Dome, was June 2, 1983 --the International Wrestling Grand Prix final, also in Tokyo (the old Sumo Hall). He faced Antonio Inoki, who was supposed to win the thing. The finish saw Hogan clothesline him off the ring apron. Inoki accidentally landed head-first on the floor and was out cold. Hogan was awarded the title; Inoki was unconscious the entire next day and almost died. If you have a tape of the match, watch it and tell me Hogan followed the script. His own script.

In 1984, the two met again in the same arena. That one had a Dusty finish so bizarre Dusty himself would have been hard-pressed to top. Riki Choshu, who was feuding with Inoki, was at ringside and clotheslined Inoki and Hogan, causing Hogan to lose via countout. More than 13,000 fans showed their appreciation for that decisive finish by rioting afterwards. Amazing...Hogan wouldn't let himself be pinned, submit or even do a clean count out, for God's sakes.

I seem to have gone on a bit here. Welcome ladies and gentlemen to my debut two-part column.

Paul would appreciate any comments, objections or biting criticisms to his weekly column. Send letters, etc. to Three Count or 5283 Glenlock St., Philadelphia, PA 19124.

Referee Switch Dooms Chicana

This week's Galavision show was good, but unfortunately, not as great as I expected. Tickets for this show were sold out four days in advance, and about 8,000 seats at closed-circuit locations were sold. One of the let downs of this show was that the highly awaited battle between **Atlantis** and **Bestia Salvaje** did not take place, as Salvaje was injured. The show announced that Salvaje had sustained a broken nose, while **Dave Meltzer's Wrestling Observer Newsletter** said Salvaje had

Carlos Rey



blown out his ankle. Whatever the case, Salvaje was replaced by **La Fiera** (**Arturo Castro**). There will also be continuing analysis of the top two matches from this show in next week's newsletter.

1) The rudo team of **Los Intocables** (**Pierroth Jr.**-**Jacque Mate** (translated in English as "Check Mate")-**Masakre**) defeating the tecnico squad comprised of **Octagon** (the name implies martial arts skills)-**Mascara Sagrada** (translated: Sacred mask)-**Apolo Dantes**) in two of three falls. The Intocables entered the ring in style, having donned tuxedos and their new EMLL six-man tag-team titles to the ring. Pierroth also had his EMLL world lightweight belt, which he recently won from **Jerry Estrada Jr.** in a heel vs. heel match. Pierroth was also given a trophy by a fan at ringside (who was wearing a black leather jacket reading "Rudo de Rudos"). This match featured some brawling with a lot of quick moves, which I feel is the successful mix of ingredients for a good match. Dabtes pinned Masakre with a bridge on a belly-to-back suplex, Octagon made Mate submit with las tijeras (a head scissors) and Pierroth not returning to the ring for the fall after getting beaten outside the ring. The second fall went to los rudos, with Dante getting worked over by all three rudos and Pierroth standing on his chest for the pin. Sagrada then entered the ring, but was kicked into submission by Pierroth. Octagon was thrown from the ring and left in no condition to return. The techincos began making a comeback in the third fall, as Sagrada began gaining an advantage on Pierroth. However, Sagrada could not keep the pressure and was forced to submit to Pierroth to end the match.

2) In what was billed as Konan's retirement match, the tecnico team of **Konan-Perro Aguayo** (translated as Aguayo the Dog)-**Rayo de Jalisco Jr.** (translated as bolt of lightning) defeated the rudo team of **Cein Caras**

(100 faces)-**Mascara Año 2000** (Mask of the year 2000)-**Universo 2000**. It is said Konan wants to pursue a signing and acting career (he has become a major baby-face since taking an acting role on a Mexican soap opera), but who knows, as is supposed to be heading to the WWF (a rumor that has been around since January 1991). The rudos are known as The Dynamite Brothers, and hold the Mexican national trios championship. The belt was not defended in this match. Also, Konan continued to try and attack heel referee **El Gato Montini**, but the rudo team protected him. The technicos quickly won the first fall when Konan made Universo submit and Jalisco forced Año 2000 to do the same. Aguayo jumped outside the ring onto Caras, leaving him unable to answer the count. The technicos also won the next fall, with Konan pinning Año 2000, Aguayo pinning Caras and Universo left outside the ring unable to enter.

3) Atlantis defeated La Fiera in his 32nd defense of the NWA world middleweight title in two-of-three falls. Both men were supposed to have seconds in their corners, but Fiera did not. Atlantis had Jalisco with him. Fiera was real good years ago, especially after a tour of Japan, but has gotten fat and slowed down considerably, which hurt this match. The two split the first two falls, and the heat really picked up when Pierroth appeared to second Fiera. For some reason, fans go wild when Pierroth appears. It really looked as if Fiera would win the title, but Atlantis won with a submission hold.

4) **Blue Panther** won a mask vs. mask match from **The Love Machine** (**Art Barr**). This match had three referees because of Montini's recent actions. No matter how hard they try, the promotion cannot get fans to cheer Love Machine and boo Blue Panther. After missing a shoulder block off the top rope, Panther made Machine submit in the first fall. The second fall, Machine lost via disqualification after using a piledriver, which in Mexico is illegal. Barr gave an interview after the match that will be elaborated on more next week, but he spoke fairly fluent Spanish and claimed that Mexico would be his new home. The promotion also said Barr had been wrestling under a mask for four years.

*Carlos Rey has watched lucha libre for more than 10 years, and cannot get enough of the style. He not only writes a weekly column for **Three Count.**, but, in addition, has tapes of Galavision shows available. Write to him at 996 West 45th Place, Hialeah FL 33012 for more information. He is hoping to begin receiving tapes of the UWA soon. Look for more details and a review here.*

Misawa Favored in AJPW Tourney

After last column's detour to Wrestlemania VIII, we've got some catching up to do on Japanese happenings. So, as Akira Fukuzawa would say, welcome to... P-P-Pro Wrestling Ne-w-w-w-s:

• All Japan Pro Wrestling is in the midst of its Champion Carnival tournament. The tournament consists of two separate round-robin tournaments with the winner of each tourney facing off to determine the Carnival champion. Top

John Muse

wrestlers in team A are Jumbo Tsuruta, Mitsuhiro Misawa, Terry Gordy, Masa Fuchi and Tsuyoshi Kikuchi. Top names in team B are Stan Hansen, Steve Williams, Toshiaki Kawada, Kenta Kobashi and Akira Taue. The following is a brief rundown on the main matches thus far in the tournament.

- 3/20: Kawada defeats Kobashi via submission.
- 3/22: Tsuruta pins Kikuchi
- 3/27: Tsuruta vs. Gordy -- 30-minute draw
Hansen pins Kobashi
- 3/29: Williams vs. Kobashi -- 30-minute draw
- 3/30: Gordy pins Kikuchi
- 3/31: Taue upsets Kawada
Misawa pins Kikuchi
- 4/2: Tsuruta vs. Misawa -- 30-minute draw
Gordy pins Fuchi
Williams pins Taue
- 4/4: Hansen pins Taue

The top matches on April 14 should determine which wrestlers will fight for the Carnival championship on the 17th. For team A, Misawa faces Gordy and the likely final for team B pits Hansen against Williams. Tsuruta won the Carnival championship last year by defeating Hansen on April 16, 1991 in Nagoya. Misawa appears to be the favorite this year. Both Tsuruta and Hansen have had victories over Misawa in recent singles matches and Misawa could use a big win, something he hasn't had since defeating Tsuruta in June of 1990.

The tournament has been drawing sell-outs almost every night, which should seem odd to the U.S. wrestling fan because of the lack of success tournaments have in this country. Unlike other Japanese tournaments, this one is not all that "over" with the sport's fans. However, because the wrestling is so good and interest-

ing match-ups are provided, the tournament becomes important.

• From April 16-30, New Japan will be running a round-robin tournament of its own, this one of the junior heavyweight variety. These junior tournaments have provided outstanding matches in the past going back to the days of Tiger Mask (Satoru Sayama) and Dynamite Kid (who enjoyed success as a singles wrestler long before becoming a member of The British Bulldogs). Norio Honaga won last year's tourney by upsetting Jushin "Thunder" Lyger on April 30 at Tokyo's Sumo Hall (Such upsets have become more commonplace under the Riki Choshu booking era, as Choshu likes to add an air of suspense to each match). This year's participants are Liger, Honaga, Pegasus Kid (Chris Benoit), Negro Casas, El Samurai, Eddie Guerrero (the youngest of the Guerrero brothers and one with incredible potential), David Finlay (a legendary English performer), Flying Scorpio and Koji Kanemoto.

• As a result of Wrestlemania, the Ric Flair vs. Genechiro Tenryu matches scheduled for April 17 in Yokohama and April 18 in Tokyo are being called the Battle of Kings I and II. The SWS was notified in time to change the billing of the main event.

The change means Flair will most likely put Tenryu over. Tenryu needs wins to restore the credibility he has lost in recent months.

• All Japan Women's Pro Wrestling has its Wrestlemarinpiad show planned for April 25 (the show is for that group what Wrestlemania is for the WWF). Top matches are Bull Nakano defending the WWWA womens title vs. Aja Kong, Pacific champ Bison Kimura defending vs. Toshiyo Yamada, IWA champ Kyoko Inoue vs. Manami Toyota and Debbie Malenko-Sake Hasegawa vs. Takako Inoue-Mariko Yoshida in a Japanese tag title match.



Jushin Lyger

Next issue: I'm very proud of this issue, as we have expanded our photograph collection (thanks to the help of John Patton and David Stubbs, Carlos Rey, Dr. Mike Lano, Gary and Charles Penn, and Charlie Mattos). Next week's issue will feature the conclusion of the John Arezzi interview, an update on Sting's condition, more on the situation at Global Wrestling, a two-page report on my announcing debut for Suncoast Pro Wrestling (and rundown of the card), a guest column by Michelle DeQuattro, more on the Ric Flair situation, and the usual columns by Paul Hanlin Jr. and Rey. I'm toying with the idea of making next week a double issue so I will have time to study during finals week. See ya' in seven days.

Three Count Professional Wrestling Newsletter©
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